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Für Schüler, die schon vorher Deutsch hatten, dürfte das erwähnte Spanhoofd'sche Buch zu einfach sein; für Anfänger vom Hochschulalter kenne ich kein besseres:

c) Welches Lehrbuch für das 3. Jahr (Erste Klasse Hochschule).

Fortsetzung folgt.

## **The Position of German Teaching in the High Schools of Ontario.**

(Für die Pädagogischen Monatshefte)

Von *R. S. Jenkins*, Orangeville, H. S.

The great province of Ontario in the Dominion of Canada is peopled almost exclusively by descendants of emigrants from the British Isles. There are only a small number of localities where are to be found people of a different nationality. Along the St. Lawrence River in a few counties there is a considerable sprinkling of French Canadians, who have crossed from the neighboring province of Quebec. Descendants of the old French settlers are also to be met with in the south-west corner of the province. Quite a considerable German population is found in the central districts of the western part of Ontario, where the stranger comes upon such names as Berlin and Hanover to attest the loyalty of the people to the Vaterland. But with these slight exceptions the province can boast of a comparative homogeneity of population according to New World standards. From the almost exclusive use of the English language the study of a foreign tongue is hardly considered from its practical side at all. It is true that French is one of the languages of the Federal Government, but this fact has hardly any importance outside of the French Province of Quebec. Though Canada is officially a bilingual country, it is practically unilingual through by far its greatest extent. Consequently the teaching of foreign languages is confined as a rule to the higher institutions of learning, and their acquirement is regarded very largely as one of the parts of a more advanced education.

A very natural consequence has been the study of modern languages from an almost exclusively literary point of view. The aim has been to gain the power of reading German and French books, and thus the learning of the oral use of the languages has to a considerable extent been neglected. Another cause that has contributed very largely to this result has been the fact that the annual examinations in German and French set by the Education Department, for which the great proportion of High School pupils prepare, are exclusively written examinations. There are no oral tests applied, and consequently candidates are inclined to be neglectful of what they are not to be examined on. There has also been a tendency to emphasize unduly the study of formal grammar by requiring

on these examinations the translation of difficult idiomatic sentences from English into the foreign language. We have, however, to note considerable improvement in this respect of late years. The Department also very wisely requires oral work in the teaching of modern languages to be carried on continuously, and an effort is being made by the more advanced teachers to get out of the narrow limits of work necessary for those pupils who wish merely to pass a written examination.

One thing that considerably embarrasses the teacher in his work is his lack of power to choose the books that will be most serviceable in his classes. The Department has authorized a series of textbooks for the High Schools and will not allow others to be employed. In each of the languages of French and German it has prescribed for use in the schools a grammar which is based very largely on the old classical method. Thus the teacher is compelled to follow the system of a particular text-book or be without its time-saving aid if he adopts a method of a different kind in his classes. How unfortunate this arrangement is working may be gathered from a very able paper by Mr. W. C. Ferguson of London, Ontario, read before the Modern Language Section of the Ontario Educational Association at its annual meeting in April, 1899. The following is quoted from page 146 of the "Proceedings": —

"Now, most of our Modern Language teaching and all our examination tests are founded on the principle of translation, and unfortunately translation usually precedes any attempt at conversation. Many progressive teachers, I know, begin with conversational methods, but when I say that the majority of our High School teachers commence with the translation system I speak advisedly. They are forced to do so, to a certain extent, by the Regulations of the Department. We are given certain books—French and German grammars—to use as text-books, and the teacher runs a big risk who would be foolhardy enough to endeavor to use any other text-book than those authorized by the Department—though he must know, if he knows any thing, that there are many helps infinitely better for junior classes. But you may say, why use any text-book at all? How can you do so with conversation? If you have a book, do you not take all the life and interest out of the lesson? It is a question altogether of expediency. A book is necessary to save time. By means of a good book the pupil can see at once the symbol that stands for the sound and an immense amount of time is saved, which must otherwise be spent in putting such material on the boards. An ideal method, with an ideal class, with ideal time at your disposal would be to teach altogether without the text-book, but unfortunately pupils do not attend every day, they lose the notes and vocabularies you give them, and they constantly forget the preceding lessons. So that a text-book, even for conversational methods, seems to be a necessity. But what book? is the question. The greatest trouble is that there are no books for the use of French and

German classes authorized by the Department that are of any especial service in this respect to Modern Language teachers. Such books certainly do exist, and the names could be given of a number of books which I should be delighted to introduce into my own classes, if I were permitted to do so."

It is sincerely to be hoped that it will in time become possible to persuade the Department that it is seriously injuring the work of education by prescribing too closely the methods to be followed. One of the greatest needs in the Ontario system is the allowing of freer play to the teacher's individuality.

With regard to the number of pupils in the High Schools who take languages the following table from the last Report of the Minister of Education may not be uninteresting. The figures are given down to 1898, none later being procurable.

	Total no. of pupils.	Latin.	Greek.	French.	German.
1867.....	5,696	5,171	802	2,164	...
1872.....	7,968	3,860	900	2,828	341
1877.....	9,229	4,955	871	3,091	442
1882.....	12,348	4,591	815	5,363	962
1887.....	17,459	5,409	997	6,180	1,350
1892.....	22,837	9,006	1,070	10,398	2,796
1897.....	24,390	16,873	1,421	13,761	5,169
1898.....	23,301	19,313	1,456	13,866	6,288

The report goes on to say: "In 1867, ninety per cent. of the whole attendance studied Latin; in 1898 the number was about eighty-three per cent. of those in attendance. In 1867 fifteen per cent. studied Greek; in 1898 only six per cent. were engaged in studying this subject. In 1867 thirty-eight per cent. of pupils studied French, and none studied German; in 1898 these numbers increased to sixty per cent. and twenty-seven per cent. respectively."

On the whole we may expect during the coming few years a steady improvement in the work done in German in our High Schools. It will evidently be along the line of the training of the ear as well as of the eye, so long the only avenue considered by the teacher of languages. The educational world is slowly working towards the conception that the proper instruction includes the training of as many as possible of the wonderful faculties which the human individual possesses.

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